

**M E M O R A N D U M**

TO: Education & Culture [E&C] Committee

FROM: Carolyn Chen, Legislative Analyst <sup>CC</sup>

SUBJECT: **Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program and Supplemental Appropriation #23-56 to the FY23 Capital Budget, Montgomery County Government Department of Recreation: Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center [P722106], \$75,000**

**FY23-28 Recommended Capital Improvement Program [CIP] Worksession: Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center [P722106]**

PURPOSE: Review and make recommendations for Council consideration – vote expected.

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**Expected Participants:**

- David Dise, Director, Department of General Services (DGS)
- Greg Ossont, Deputy Director, DGS
- Ronnie Warner, Chief, Office of Planning and Development, DGS
- Amy Donin, Redevelopment Program Manager, DGS
- Luisa Cardona, Director, Mid-County Regional Services Center, Community Engagement Cluster (CEC)
- Suzan Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer, Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC)
- Mary Beck, Capital Budget Manager, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- Alicia Singh, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, (OMB)

**FY23-28 Recommended CIP: Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center [P722106]**

<b>Public Benefit</b>	<b>Council Staff Recommendation</b>
➔ To fund the County’s share of schematic design so that the County’s affordable housing partner can submit a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Application in late Spring 2023.	Recommends approval of <b>Supplemental Appropriation #23-56 to the FY23 Capital Budget for \$75,000</b> as submitted by the County Executive on January 17, 2023.
➔ To co-locate affordable housing with an arts and cultural center at 11507 Georgia Ave.	Recommends approval of <b>FY24 Appropriation Request of \$2.2M with FY23-28 funding of \$24.575M</b> as submitted by the County Executive on January 17, 2023.

[Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center Status Update – Public Website](#) (Maintained by Office of Planning and Development, Department of General Services)

[March 22, 2023, Racial Equity Impact Assessment \(REIA\) Supplemental Appropriation \(SA\) #23-56 Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center \[P722106\]](#).....©A1-4

Amendment and Supplemental Appropriation #23-56 to the FY23 Capital Budget, Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center [P722106].....©1-5  
➤ January 17, 2023, County Executive Memo.....©1-2  
➤ Draft Resolution.....©3-4  
➤ Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center [P722106] – Revised March 15, 2022.....©5

FY23-28 Recommended CIP Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center [P722106].....©6-11  
➤ Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center [P722106] – Revised December 21, 2022.....©6  
➤ January 17, 2023, County Executive Memo Excerpt on Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center [P722106].....©7-11  
➤ March 20, 2023, Wheaton Arts Parade Support Letter for alternate location of Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center in Wheaton Urban Core.....©12-14  
➤ March 27, 2023, Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC) Support Letter on CIP Amendments for Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center.....©15-16

[March 10, 2023, Montgomery County Planning Board February 2023 Wheaton Downtown Study](#)

[April 25, 2022,E&C Committee Worksession on Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center \[P722106\]](#)  
[April 25, 2022, Council Central Staff Memo](#)



## OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Tiffany Ward  
Director and Chief Equity Officer

### MEMORANDUM

March 22, 2023

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director  
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director  
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-56 -  
Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Wheaton Arts and  
Cultural Center

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #23-56 – Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center – has a strong likelihood to advance racial equity and social justice in the arts and cultural sector, while also providing equitable access to a public good that is enjoyed in other parts of the County. This project will also increase the availability of affordable housing in and around the Wheaton Central Business District plan area.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center project provides funding for site evaluation and design to build a new arts and cultural facility that will sit within the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District. The mission of the project is to create a center to serve the artistically varied and active arts community and to cultivate the diversity of the arts in Wheaton by enhancing the cultural and educational opportunities for community participation in the arts<sup>1</sup>. The new arts and cultural facility will be co-located with an affordable housing development. Supplemental Appropriation #23-56 will fund the County's share of the schematic design and the sketch plan submission to M-NCPPC. Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP), the County's affordable housing development partner will be submitting a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) application in May

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<sup>1</sup> RESJ Template Responses. January 2023.

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-56—  
Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Wheaton Arts and  
Cultural Center

March 22, 2023

Page 2 of 4

2023 and design is required prior to submitting the LIHTC application. A project amendment has also been requested in the FY24 budget submission<sup>2</sup>. The updated project schedule shows construction of the facility occurring in FY27 and beyond.

- III. **ANALYSIS:** ORESJ developed a Capital Improvements Program Budget Equity Tool (CIP BET) and Guidance Manual<sup>3</sup> to help stakeholders in Montgomery County incorporate a racial equity lens into CIP project development and resource decisions. Best practices for using a racial equity tool, such as the CIP BET, suggest that the tool should be used early and often in project development and involve a diverse set of project stakeholders—including community members and intended beneficiaries of the project. The Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center project was reviewed during the FY24 review process using the CIP BET framework and received five stars, indicating the project *strongly* aligns with Montgomery County’s policy to reduce and eliminate racial disparities and other inequities. Within the context of the CIP BET framework, we offer several observations for consideration:

*What racial disparities or inequities in Montgomery County does this project seek to reduce or eliminate?*

In 2018, the County engaged a consultant to conduct an arts and cultural feasibility study. The first phase of the feasibility study produced preliminary findings and recommendations for a new arts and cultural center in Wheaton<sup>4</sup>. The second phase of the feasibility study produced a programming and business plan for the envisioned center<sup>5</sup>. During the study, the consultant engaged the community in a robust engagement phase. Activities included one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, town hall meetings, e-surveys, arts organizations engagements, and site visits<sup>6</sup>. Many of the engagement activities were conducted in English and Spanish. More recently, the Department of General Services (DGS) provided the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee with a project update<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Recommended FY24 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program Transmittal Memorandum from County Executive Marc Elrich. Available at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OMB/Resources/Files/omb/pdfs/fy24/ciprec/CEMemo.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Office of Racial Equity & Social Justice. Guidance Manual, FY24 Capital Improvements Program Budget Equity Tool. Available at:

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/CIP\\_EquityTool\\_101322\\_PS2.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/CIP_EquityTool_101322_PS2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Gotesman, V. and Koberstein, T. Arts and Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study, Findings & Preliminary Recommendations. Available at:

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS/Resources/Files/OPD/WheatonArtsFacilityStudyFindingPreliminaryFINAL.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Gotesman, V. and Koberstein, T. Arts and Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study, Programming and Business Plan. Available at:

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS/Resources/Files/OPD/WheatonArtsFacilityProgrammingBusinessPlanFinalJune%202019.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Project page, including a record of community outreach activities: Available at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS/OPD/WheatonArtsandCulturalCenter.html>

<sup>7</sup> DGS presentation to WUDAC on February 14, 2023. Available at:

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS/Resources/Files/OPD/Wheaton%20Arts%20Presentation%20WUDAC%2023\\_14\\_23.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS/Resources/Files/OPD/Wheaton%20Arts%20Presentation%20WUDAC%2023_14_23.pdf).

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-56—  
Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Wheaton Arts and  
Cultural Center

March 22, 2023

Page 3 of 4

The study found that while many spaces exist throughout the County, there was no dedicated space for arts or cultural activities or performances in Wheaton. The results of the study indicated the following needs: an arts facility; space to professionally develop artists and arts organizations; studio space, performance space, creative space; and space where the community can gather and participate in the arts. Family programming, programming for children, teens, and young adults were also identified as a need. The study was used to produce a program of requirements (POR), which was completed in FY20.

ORESJ has previously analyzed racial inequities impacting the public arts field. The full analysis can be found in REIA 22-67 Public Arts Trust, available here: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-67.pdf>. The REIA points to research suggesting that a focus on empowering oppressed groups and redistributing resources has the greatest potential of advancing racial equity. By deploying resources to Wheaton to develop an arts and cultural center, the County will provide both resources and opportunities to reduce racial inequities in the arts for an underserved population.

This project also will increase the number of affordable housing units in the County as MHP will partner on the project to create affordable housing on the premises. The County Council recently passed Bill 33-22 – Capital Improvements Program – Affordable Housing Feasibility Study – Required. DGS is now required to provide the Council with an affordable housing feasibility study for certain capital projects. Although the Wheaton Arts and Cultural center project was initiated before the Bill was enacted, it illustrates the potential for co-location of County facilities and affordable housing to reduce racial disparities in housing insecurity, such as rent burden and homelessness for Black and Latinx residents<sup>8</sup>. ORESJ has previously reviewed housing policy, including the historical and contemporary racial inequities shaping housing insecurity and homelessness in several REIAs. Our work can be reviewed in REIA 22-60 – Affordable Living Quarters, available here: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-60.pdf>.

***How does this project address the racial disparities and inequities you described?***

The Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center will be located in the Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan area—placing the center within a central transportation hub and crossroads. The Wheaton population is diverse, with over 75% of residents being non-white and 45% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino<sup>9</sup>. The study also found income disparities in

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<sup>8</sup> Peña, J., *Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement*, Office of Legislative Oversight, Bill 33-22: Capital Improvements Program – Affordable Housing Feasibility Study – Required. Available at: Available at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/resjis/2022/Bill33-22.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> American Community Survey. 2021 Demographic and Housing Estimates – Wheaton CDP. Available at:

<https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP05&g=160XX00US2483775&tid=ACSDP5Y2021.DP05>

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-56—  
Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Wheaton Arts and  
Cultural Center

March 22, 2023

Page 4 of 4

the area, with 61% of residents within a 20-minute drive time radius earning less than \$75,000. A link was noted in arts participation levels and available discretionary money, highlighting the need for subsidy programs to bridge the gap between arts activities and audience affordability.

***Does this project (including its development, construction, or implementation) have the potential to create any unintended consequences?***

Once the project nears completion and an operator is selected, there are several considerations that could affect the center’s ability to reduce racial inequities in the arts. These challenges were identified during the planning stages by the consultant<sup>10</sup>. The challenges identified include:

- Identifying a qualified facility operator with programming experience to activate the goals of the arts incubator
- Establishing a philanthropic program for the facility to cover the operating expenses and to fulfill the annual budget requirement
- Maintaining an active calendar of events
- Creating an equitable and inclusive use-policy that will allow access for a diversity of users
- Establishing and implementing methods for measuring the impact of the facility on Wheaton artists and the community overall

The consultant noted, that as the project progresses, the facility “must consider Wheaton’s Spanish-Speaking population and explore opportunities for reaching the target audience base when developing new programming”. While outside the scope of this REIA, a racial equity lens should continuously be applied throughout the development process, especially during the RFP process for operator selection and for arts and cultural programming and operations of the facility.

cc: David Dise, Director, Department of General Services  
Robin Riley, Director, Department of Recreation  
Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive

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<sup>10</sup>Gotesman, V. and Koberstein, T. Arts and Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study, Programming and Business Plan. Available at: <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS/Resources/Files/OPD/WheatonArtsFacilityProgrammingBusinessPlanFinalJune%202019.pdf>.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

January 17, 2023

TO: Evan Glass, President  
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive *Marc Elrich*

SUBJECT: Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program and  
Supplemental Appropriation #23-56 to the FY23 Capital Budget  
Montgomery County Government  
Department of Recreation  
Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center (No. 0722106), \$75,000

I am recommending an amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Capital Budget in the amount of \$75,000 for Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center (No. 0722106). Appropriation for this project will fund site evaluation and design for a new arts and cultural facility in the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District.

This increase is needed to fund the County's share of schematic design. The new arts and cultural facility is proposed to be co-located with an affordable housing development in the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District. Design is required before the County's affordable housing partner submits a Low Income Housing Tax Credit application in late Spring 2023. The recommended amendment is consistent with the criteria for amending the CIP because the project offers a significant opportunity which will be lost if not taken at this time.

I recommend that the County Council approve this amendment and supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$75,000 and specify the source of funds as Current Revenue: General.

I appreciate your prompt consideration of this action.

ME:as

Enclosure: Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program, Supplemental  
Appropriation #23-56

cc: Marlene Michaelson, Executive Director, Montgomery County Council  
Richard S. Madaleno, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive  
Ken Hartman, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive  
Jennifer Bryant, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
David Dise, Director, Department of General Services  
Robin Riley, Director, Department of Recreation  
Greg Ossont, Deputy Director, Department of General Services



Resolution: \_\_\_\_\_  
Introduced: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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By: Council President at the Request of the County Executive

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SUBJECT: Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program and Supplemental Appropriation #23-56 to the FY23 Capital Budget  
Montgomery County Government  
Department of Recreation  
Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center (No.0722106) \$75,000

Background

1. Section 307 of the Montgomery County Charter provides that any supplemental appropriation shall be recommended by the County Executive who shall specify the source of funds to finance it. The Council shall hold a public hearing on each proposed supplemental appropriation after at least one week's notice. A supplemental appropriation that would comply with, avail the County of, or put into effect a grant or a Federal, State or County law or regulation, or one that is approved after January 1 of any fiscal year, requires an affirmative vote of six Councilmembers. A supplemental appropriation for any other purpose that is approved before January 1 of any fiscal year requires an affirmative vote of seven Councilmembers. The Council may, in a single action, approve more than one supplemental appropriation. The Executive may disapprove or reduce a supplemental appropriation, and the Council may reapprove the appropriation, as if it were an item in the annual budget.
2. Section 302 of the Montgomery County Charter provides that the Council may amend an approved capital improvements program at any time by an affirmative vote of no fewer than six members of the Council.
3. The County Executive recommends the following capital project appropriation increases:

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Project Element</u>	<u>Cost Amount</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center	0722106	Design	\$75,000	Current Revenue: General

4. This increase is needed to fund the County’s share of schematic design. The new arts and cultural facility is proposed to be co-located with an affordable housing development in the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District. Design is required before the County’s affordable housing partner submits a Low Income Housing Tax Credit application in late Spring 2023. The recommended amendment is consistent with the criteria for amending the CIP because the project offers a significant opportunity which will be lost if not taken at this time.
5. The County Executive recommends an amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program and a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$75,000 for Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center (No. 0722106) and specifies that the source of funds will be Current Revenue: General.
6. Notice of public hearing was given and a public hearing was held.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following action:

The FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program of the Montgomery County Government is amended as reflected on the attached project description form and a supplemental appropriation is approved as follows:

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Project Element</u>	<u>Cost Amount</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center	0722106	Design	\$75,000	Current Revenue: General

This is a correct copy of Council action.

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Judy Rupp, Esq.  
Clerk of the Council

# Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center (P722106)

Category	Culture and Recreation	Date Last Modified	03/13/22
SubCategory	Recreation	Administering Agency	General Services
Planning Area	Kensington-Wheaton	Status	Planning Stage

Total	Thru FY21	Est FY22	Total 6 Years	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	Beyond 6 Years
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### EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000s)

	Total	Thru FY21	Est FY22	Total 6 Years	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design and Supervision	2,225	45	55	2,125	125	-	2,000	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>2,225</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

### FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000s)

	Total	Thru FY21	Est FY22	Total 6 Years	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	Beyond 6 Years
Current Revenue: General	175	45	55	75	75	-	-	-	-	-	-
G.O. Bonds	2,000	-	-	2,000	-	-	2,000	-	-	-	-
Recordation Tax Premium (MCG)	50	-	-	50	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDING SOURCES</b>	<b>2,225</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

### APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA (\$000s)

Appropriation FY 23 Request	50	Year First Appropriation		FY21
Appropriation FY 24 Request	-	Last FY's Cost Estimate		100
Supplemental Appropriation Request	75			
Cumulative Appropriation	100			
Expenditure / Encumbrances	45			
Unencumbered Balance	55			

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project provides for planning, site feasibility, and design activities for a new arts and cultural facility to be located in the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District. The project's specifications, including the potential for affordable housing, will be evaluated for the selected site.

### ESTIMATED SCHEDULE

Funds through FY23 will be used for planning and site feasibility work. Placeholder funding for design is included in FY25.

### COST CHANGE

Funds have been added for additional site evaluation and design costs.

### PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

A Program of Requirements (POR) funded out of the Facility Planning: MCG project was completed in FY20. The POR specifications provide for requirements for the facility. The ultimate design and configuration of the facility will depend on the characteristics of the selected site.

### FISCAL NOTE

Funding for this project was shifted from the Facility Planning: MCG (P508768) project. FY23 supplemental in Current Revenue: General for the amount of \$75,000.

### DISCLOSURES

A pedestrian impact analysis will be performed during design or is in progress.

### COORDINATION

Department of Recreation. Department of General Services.



# Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center

(P722106)

Category	Culture and Recreation	Date Last Modified	12/21/22
SubCategory	Recreation	Administering Agency	General Services
Planning Area	Kensington-Wheaton	Status	Planning Stage

Total	Thru FY22	Rem FY22	Total 6 Years	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	Beyond 6 Years
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### EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000s)

	Total	Thru FY22	Rem FY22	Total 6 Years	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design and Supervision	5,075	48	52	4,325	125	1,800	600	500	650	650	650
Construction	35,250	-	-	20,250	-	-	-	-	10,500	9,750	15,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>40,325</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>24,575</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>11,150</b>	<b>10,400</b>	<b>15,650</b>

### FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000s)

	Total	Thru FY22	Rem FY22	Total 6 Years	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	Beyond 6 Years
Current Revenue: General	175	48	52	75	75	-	-	-	-	-	-
G.O. Bonds	40,100	-	-	24,450	-	1,800	600	500	11,150	10,400	15,650
Recordation Tax Premium (MCG)	50	-	-	50	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDING SOURCES</b>	<b>40,325</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>24,575</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>11,150</b>	<b>10,400</b>	<b>15,650</b>

### APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA (\$000s)

Appropriation FY 24 Request	2,200	Year First Appropriation	FY21
Cumulative Appropriation	225	Last FY's Cost Estimate	2,150
Expenditure / Encumbrances	48		
Unencumbered Balance	177		

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project provides for planning, site feasibility, design and construction for a new arts and cultural facility to be located in the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District. The project is proposed to be co-located with an affordable housing project.

### ESTIMATED SCHEDULE

Funds through FY23 will be used for planning, site feasibility work and initial design work. Additional funding is for design, construction and interior building fit out.

### COST CHANGE

Funds have been added for design and construction costs.

### PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

A Program of Requirements (POR) funded out of the Facility Planning: MCG project was completed in FY20. The POR specifications provide for requirements for the facility. The ultimate design and configuration of the facility will depend on the characteristics of the selected site.

### FISCAL NOTE

Funding for this project was shifted from the Facility Planning: MCG (P508768) project. FY23 supplemental in Current Revenue: General for the amount of \$75,000.

### DISCLOSURES

A pedestrian impact analysis will be performed during design or is in progress.

### COORDINATION

Department of Recreation. Department of General Services.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

January 17, 2023

TO: Evan Glass, President, County Council
FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive
SUBJECT: Recommended FY24 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

I am pleased to transmit to you, in accordance with the County Charter, my Recommended FY24 Capital Budget and amendments to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). This is the biennial, or second year, of the biennial capital budget. As a result, amendments are limited to project changes that either meet the County's CIP amendment criteria, or that are necessary to address capital or operating budget constraints.

The attached CIP amendment recommendations take advantage of opportunities to leverage non-County resources and reflect our shared values of prioritizing education and core infrastructure while considering racial equity and climate change concerns. These amendments are all affordable within available resources. That being said, I am painfully aware that, without more funding, we are limited in our ability to solve local problems and to build the kind of healthy, just, economically vibrant community we want for our residents.

Overall Fiscal Context

High inflation due to supply chain issues, labor shortages, and a tight construction market has had a major impact on the biennial CIP. Montgomery County Public Schools projects were particularly impacted. Less than a month after the CIP was approved last May, MCPS requested a \$12 million supplemental appropriation for the Neelsville Middle School Major Capital project to proceed with planned construction. MCPS' biennial CIP request included \$103 million in cost increases to keep eight planned projects on schedule. Similarly, the County's Dennis Avenue Bridge, 6th District Police Station, Public Safety Communications Center Phase II upgrades, Recycling Center Complex Upgrade, Damascus Library Refurbishment project, Purple Line related projects, and Stormwater Management projects would require approximately \$24 million

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Recommended FY24 Capital Budget and
Amendments to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
January 17, 2023
Page 2 of 14

more in funding if they were to proceed with planned FY23 and FY24 construction. Nine percent State cost escalation allowances for Montgomery College's Library Renovations and Germantown Student Services Center projects added over \$17 million in additional cost pressures.

Projects to maintain core infrastructure and operations detailed below also added to the significant cost pressures that need to be addressed in the biennial CIP.

On the revenue side, the most dramatic change in CIP funding sources occurred in recordation tax receipts. Based on updated estimates, the Recommended CIP assumes the use of \$468 million of recordation taxes and \$114 million of recordation tax premium funding – a \$138 million reduction in CIP funding compared to prior approved estimates. On a positive side, school and transportation impact tax revenues are projected to increase by over \$35.8 million – primarily due to construction cost related rate changes and the allocation of some prior year unused collections. Land sale proceeds (\$29.5 million) and General Obligation bond premium (\$20.5 million) have also helped mitigate the impact of the shortfalls in recordation taxes.

I am recommending a total of \$1.72 billion in General Obligation bond issuance over the six-year period - \$40 million more than the current Spending Affordability Guideline limits. While I am maintaining the Council approved \$280 million funding level in FY23 and FY26 to FY28, I am recommending a modest increase in FY24 and FY25 to \$300 million a year to respond to a change in conditions affecting State Aid for school construction. The chart below compares my recommended General Obligation Spending Affordability Guidelines with Council's most recent actions regarding General Obligation Bond limits and spending.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND COMPARISONS: PRIOR COUNCIL APPROVED SPENDING AFFORDABILITY GUIDELINES, COUNCIL APPROVED PROGRAMMED FUNDING, AND COUNTY EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDED SPENDING AFFORDABILITY GUIDELINES

Table with 8 columns: G.O. Bond Levels, 6 Year Total, FY23, FY24, FY25, FY26, FY27, FY28. Rows include Approved SAG - February 2022, Approved CIP - May 2022, and CE Recommended - January 2023.

MCPS staff have already been informed by the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) that due to higher interest rates, MCPS' allocation of Built to Learn State Aid for school construction has shrunk from \$378 million to \$357 million – a \$21 million decrease. The impact of higher interest rates coupled with high construction cost inflation is eroding our ability to execute long planned school projects that are ready to move forward. I hope that you and your

My Recommended Spending Affordability Guidelines are \$320 million below the approved FY18 General Obligation bond Spending Affordability Guidelines for the six-year period, when \$340 million a year was programmed (i.e. \$2.04 billion over the six-year period).

The 2019 Montgomery County Racial Equity profile reported that due to structural racial inequities, Black residents were 145.6 percent more likely than White residents to take public transportation. By supporting expansion of the County's transit operations which have historically benefitted communities of color, the depot is likely to support racial equity and social justice goals.

#### Lactation Rooms in County Buildings

As a result of Bill 11-22, *Lactation Rooms in County Buildings*, that I proudly signed into law on July 26, 2022, County law now requires at least one lactation room for County employees in each existing County building, including a sink with running water and plumbing systems or with nearby access to running water. This new project will fund an assessment of all County-owned and leased facilities as well as improvements needed to comply with the law's requirements. An FY23 supplemental appropriation request and CIP amendment is being sent under separate cover to fund the facility assessment study and initial construction.

#### Elizabeth Housing Demolition

The South County Regional Recreation and Aquatics Center (SCRRAC) is being built as part of the Housing Opportunities Commission's (HOC) Elizabeth Square mixed-income, multigenerational, mixed-use development. This new project will provide HOC with half the requested funds to demolish their current Elizabeth House public housing development prior to further redevelopment of the site and the opening of the SCRRAC. The remaining demolition costs will be covered through a long-term loan from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and HOC funds. Demolition of the building this spring/summer will result in lower operating costs for HOC and ensure safe, easy access to SCRRAC patrons.

#### **Other County Government Project Enhancements**

##### Wheaton Arts & Cultural Center

I am also particularly pleased that we have been able to secure a partner to make our dreams of a Wheaton arts facility a reality. The County has selected Montgomery Housing Partnership's (MHP) proposal to combine an affordable housing development with a new, County-funded arts center in the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District. MHP has an agreement with Montgomery County Parks to swap a former WMATA-owned land parcel on Georgia Avenue with MHP's Amherst Square Apartments on the east side of Elkin Street. MHP will develop the former WMATA site with two affordable rental buildings with 280 units, a standalone garage, and 40 affordable, for sale units. The arts center will be included on the ground floor of the first rental building fronting on Georgia Avenue. The center will include two performance spaces, classrooms, gallery space, back of house support space, and administrative offices. In addition,

once MHP develops the former WMATA site, Parks will redevelop the Amherst Square Apartments site with a new community park.

This project must proceed at this time so that MHP can apply this year for low-income housing tax credits from the State to maximize housing affordability. Without committing to the project this year, we risk losing this opportunity to co-locate affordable housing with an attractive community amenity. In order to minimize the financial impact to the CIP, I have assumed that buildout of the interior space will be funded in FY29; however, I am pursuing State funding for the project to expedite the interior build out.

When evaluating this project, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice noted the community engagement process involved in determining the need for an arts and culture space in Wheaton. They also indicated that the project has a strong likelihood of advancing racial equity in the arts and culture sector, while also providing equitable access to a public good that is enjoyed in other parts of the County.

#### Preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)

My Recommended CIP also includes a \$30.2 million increase in the Preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) project. Using \$40 million appropriated last May, the NOAH project has already used \$33.7 million to help close on a \$44-million Right of First Refusal deal for Scarborough Square and used \$1 million for a Schuyler Avenue project with a commitment to provide the remaining funds to the Housing Opportunity Commission's Battery Lane project. Together, these projects will preserve 118 affordable housing units. In addition, the project has already generated \$30.2 million in loan repayments, which will be made available for additional lending.

As a technical matter, I would also ask that the County Council approve a provision that allows for the automatic reappropriation of the Preservation of NOAH project loan repayments as the Council has done with the Affordable Housing Acquisition and Preservation project. This will facilitate a more rapid use of these funds to support affordable housing developments.

The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice recently noted that the Preservation of NOAH project was "designed with inequities related to housing cost burden for low-income households, specifically households of color," in mind. ORESJ noted that the project "targets resources towards helping residents in well-established/older communities avoiding displacement created by rising prices."

#### Resurfacing Parking Lots: MCG

I am recommending an FY23 \$125,000 supplemental to make parking lot improvements at the former Hillandale Elementary School parking lot. These improvements will allow the East

Unfortunately, due to the cost pressures and revenue shortfalls mentioned above, it was necessary to delay the following projects for fiscal reasons: White Flint Fire Station 23; Outdoor Firearms Training Center; Bradley Boulevard (MD 191) Improvements; Capital Crescent Trail; Falls Road Bikeway and Pedestrian Facility; Forest Glen Passageway; Goldsboro Road Sidewalk and Bikeway; Tuckerman Lane Sidewalk; Observation Drive Extended; Summit Avenue Extension; and Chevy Chase Library and Redevelopment.

### Project Savings

Prior year savings were realized from a number of projects including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance; White Flint Redevelopment Program; County Radio Replacement and Related Equipment; Montgomery County Detention Center Partial Demolition and Renovation; PSTA Academic Building Complex; and the Silver Spring Lot 3 Parking Garage.

### Racial Equity and Climate Change

As part of the FY23-28 Biennial CIP process, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) assisted the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) in developing a budget equity tool to encourage departments and decision makers to consider the racial equity and social justice impacts of proposed projects, project amendments, and budget decisions. ORESJ staff conducted training and provided technical assistance to departments as they requested CIP amendments. In addition, racial equity was considered in assessing possible CIP additions and deferrals. Where possible, efforts were made to hold harmless projects which could address racial disparities.

In their analysis, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice also noted ways in which different approaches to implementing projects could impact racial equity. This input is useful to continuing conversations about how programs can be structured to achieve our racial equity and social justice goals.

Biennial CIP project changes that have the greatest potential to advance racial equity and social justice include the \$30.2 million increase in the Preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing; additional High School Wellness Centers in the highest need schools; the Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center; Digital Equity – Montgomery Connects grant funding to bring broadband to affordable housing complexes; school construction projects serving communities primarily comprised of Black, Latino, and low-income students; and Montgomery College projects.

My Recommended CIP includes \$1.4 billion in funding for projects that advance our Climate Change goals. As previously noted, my Recommended CIP includes additional funding to provide a full upgrade of the County's recycling center, and funds have been included for planning and design for a new Transit maintenance depot to accommodate an expanded fleet and

low emission vehicle maintenance and fueling/charging facilities. Funding for new HVAC systems for the Executive Office Building, the Judicial Center, and the 4<sup>th</sup> District Police Station will improve energy efficiency. Fiscal constraints also led to deferrals in a number of pedestrian/bicycle facility projects.

### Need for Additional Resources

In the not so distant past, the County had more resources to support the capital budget. As recently as FY18, the County was issuing \$340 million a year in General Obligation debt. And, over my objections<sup>2</sup>, the prior Council approved changes to the Growth and Infrastructure Policy (formerly known as the Subdivision Staging Policy) which, at the time, were expected to, respectively, reduce schools and transportation impact taxes by \$9.5 million and \$3 million a year.<sup>3</sup> As noted above, our constrained resources are limiting our ability to achieve our educational, environmental, transportation, housing, economic development, and community enhancement goals. While my staff and I are aggressively pursuing State and federal funding opportunities, partnerships that leverage the resources of others, and creative financing mechanisms, I hope that we can collectively explore other local funding options.

### Set-Aside Considerations

Set-asides are annual funds that the County intentionally leaves unprogrammed to provide capacity to respond to unexpected needs and opportunities. The recommended capital budget assumes a six-year \$151,212,000 set-aside with \$25,322,000 available in FY23 and FY24. There are several projects that will be updating cost estimates in the coming months that may need to tap into these funds.

### Supplemental Appropriation Requests

I will be sending, under separate cover, the following FY23 Supplemental Appropriations and CIP Amendments: EOB/HVAC Renovation; HVAC/Elec Replacement; MCG; Lactation Rooms in County Buildings; Resurfacing Parking Lots; MCG; 6<sup>th</sup> District Police Station; Public Safety Communications Center, Phase II, Electrical Distribution and HVAC Upgrade; Streetlighting; Ag Land Pres Easements; Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center; Preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Fund; WSSC Sewer and Storm Line Improvements at Elizabeth Square; and Elizabeth House Demolition.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/Resources/Files/2020/CE-letter-Bill38-20veto.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> November 12, 2020 2020-2024 Subdivision Staging Policy Council packet available at [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20201112/20201112\\_1-2.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2020/20201112/20201112_1-2.pdf)

FY 23-28 Biennial Recommended CIP  
 January Budget Amendments Summary (\$000s)  
 17-Jan-23

Project #	Project Name	Explanation of Adjustment	FY23-28 Change (\$000s)	Funding Sources
<b>New Projects - FY23-28 Amendments</b>				
P362310	Lactation Rooms in County Buildings	New project to support planning and implementation of lactation rooms in County buildings as required by County Code. FY23 supplemental request.	2,145	Current Revenue: General, G.O. Bonds
P502402	New Transit Maintenance Depot	New project with funding for preliminary planning and development.	2,000	Current Revenue: Mass Transit
P092302	Elizabeth House Demolition	New Project. FY23 supplemental appropriation to demolish HOC's Elizabeth House complex to support the Elizabeth Square mixed-use redevelopment project, including the County's South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center project.	1,500	Current Revenue: General
<b>Existing Projects - FY23 Supplementals</b>				
P361103	EOB HVAC Renovation	Supplemental appropriation request related to HVAC work required for the Executive Office Building.	3,972	G.O. Bonds
P508941	HVAC/Elec Replacement: MCG	FY23 supplemental appropriation (\$9,737,000) and \$339,000 transfer from the Energy Systems Modernization project to purchase and install HVAC replacement systems at the Judicial Center and Wheaton District Fourth District Police Station.	10,076	G.O. Bonds
P509914	Resurfacing Parking Lots: MCG	FY23 \$125,000 G.O. Bond supplemental appropriation to refurbish the parking lot at the former Hillandale Elementary School to support a new cold storage unit used for East County Hub Collaborative community food distribution.	125	G.O. Bonds
P502315	North Bethesda Metro Station Area Redevelopment Infrastructure	Appropriation is needed for the remaining \$1.9 million in FY23 State Aid.	0	
P451504	Apparatus Replacement Program	FY23 supplemental to advance appropriation for approved FY24 expenditures to replace fire and rescue vehicles due to ongoing supply chain issues.	0	Current Revenue: Fire, Short-Term Financing
P470301	6th District Police Station	Funds are needed in FY23 to award the construction contract and cover supply chain, equipment and other construction cost increases.	5,863	G.O. Bonds
P472102	Public Safety Communications Center, Phase II, Electrical Distribution and HVAC Upgrade	Funds are needed in FY23 to award the construction contract and cover supply chain, equipment and other construction cost increases.	4,804	G.O. Bonds
P507055	Streetlighting	FY23 State Aid supplemental appropriation (\$250,000) to support the installation of pedestrian pathway lighting along the Park Overlook Walking Path in the Rockville area.	250	G.O. Bonds, State Aid, Utility Incentives
P722106	Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center	Funds through FY23 will be used for planning, site feasibility work and initial design work. Additional funding in FY24-27 for design, construction begins in FY27, and arts buildout occurs in beyond 6 years.	22,525	Current Revenue: General, G.O. Bonds
P788911	Ag Land Pres Easements	FY23 supplemental provides \$1.306 million from Rural Legacy Grant State Aid and \$1.336 from additional Agricultural Land Transfer Tax receipts.	2,642	Contributions, Federal Aid, Investment Income, State Aid, Agricultural Transfer Tax, Developer Payments



**Recommended FY24 Capital Budget  
Montgomery County Government**

Project Name (Project Number)	FY24 Appropriation	Cumulative Appropriation	Total Appropriation
Traffic Signal System Modernization (P500704)	1,238,000	44,928,000	46,166,000
Traffic Signals (P507154)	5,335,000	48,118,000	53,453,000
White Flint Traffic Analysis and Mitigation (P501202)	81,000	1,490,000	1,571,000
White Oak Local Area Transportation Improvement Program (P501540)	500,000	450,000	950,000
Child Care Renovations (P601901)	7,418,000	8,655,000	16,073,000
High School Wellness Center and Expanded Wellness Services (P640902)	21,350,000	16,997,000	38,347,000
Restoration Center (P602301)	1,171,000	788,000	1,959,000
School Based Health & Linkages to Learning Centers (P640400)	1,095,000	13,167,000	14,262,000
21st Century Library Enhancements Level Of Effort (P711503)	825,000	7,332,000	8,157,000
Library Refurbishment Level of Effort (P711502)	3,371,000	19,256,000	22,627,000
Noyes Library for Young Children Rehabilitation and Renovation (P711704)	84,000	4,507,000	4,591,000
Cost Sharing: MCG (P720601)	900,000	45,075,000	45,975,000
Holiday Park Net Zero Initiative (P722301)	2,975,000	104,000	3,079,000
Kennedy Shriver Aquatic Center Building Envelope Improvement (P721503)	830,000	30,628,000	31,458,000
Public Arts Trust (P729658)	408,000	2,365,000	2,773,000
Recreation Facilities Refurbishment (P722105)	3,000,000	3,167,000	6,167,000
Swimming Pools Slide Replacement (P722101)	584,000	2,505,000	3,089,000
Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center (P722106)	2,200,000	225,000	2,425,000
Ag Land Pres Easements (P788911)	529,000	20,489,000	21,018,000
Facility Planning: Storm Drains (P508180)	480,000	7,566,000	8,046,000
Storm Drain Culvert Replacement (P501470)	1,700,000	18,200,000	19,900,000
Facility Planning: Stormwater Management (P809319)	1,037,000	16,954,000	17,991,000
Stormwater Management Facility Major Structural Repair (P800700)	2,800,000	40,244,000	43,044,000
Stormwater Management Retrofit: Countywide (P808726)	1,596,000	100,934,000	102,530,000
Burtonsville Community Revitalization (P760900)	(48,000)	2,740,000	2,692,000
Countywide Facade Easement Program (P762102)	719,000	952,000	1,671,000
Facility Planning: HCD (P769375)	125,000	3,530,000	3,655,000
Affordable Housing Acquisition and Preservation (P760100)*	32,000,000	306,986,000	338,986,000
Full Upgrade of Existing Recycling Center Complex (P802201)	7,280,000	20,350,000	27,630,000
Transfer Station Fire Detection and Suppression System (P802101)	(177,000)	6,000,000	5,823,000
<b>Total - Montgomery County Government</b>	<b>406,828,000</b>	<b>3,073,858,000</b>	<b>3,480,686,000</b>

March 20, 2023

Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive  
Executive Office Building  
101 Monroe St, 2nd Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

2023 MAR 22 AM 8:48:04  
RECEIVED



Dear Mr. Elrich,

Wheaton Arts Parade greatly appreciates your leadership and commitment to the arts in Wheaton by including funds for an arts center in your FY24 Capital Improvements Budget. We are writing to urge you to consider the views of Wheaton's artists, arts organizations, and businesses before making a final decision on the location for the arts center. More than 200 residents and businesses have signed the attached petition and that number only increases as more people become aware of this issue.

Your recent public comments indicate that you have selected a site on the outskirts of Wheaton because of cost and expediency and that you rejected a site in Wheaton's core business district because it is too small. We call your attention to the fact that the size requirement for your site selection has been based on a false assumption that the arts center must have two performance spaces on the ground floor. We understand that this was recommended by your consultants back in 2019, but that requirement was never weighed against the benefit of having only one performance space if the arts center could be located near the Metro.

It is unlikely that an arts center in the selected location will attract any audiences by Metro. Your own planning department has found that both Georgia Ave and University Blvd act as barriers to pedestrian traffic. Audiences, therefore, will be arriving by car and will need to compete with MHP residents for parking spaces in the evenings. Meanwhile, the county parking garage under the MNCPPC headquarters will be underutilized in the evenings.

The proposed design for the arts center lacks any studio space for visual artists, dancers, or musicians and there is no plan for a gallery separate from the stage lobby. Your consultants identified studio space as the highest priority for local artists.

But of greatest concern to Wheaton residents and businesses is whether the proposed location for the arts center will stimulate economic activity in Wheaton. An arts center located near the Metro Station would stimulate business at restaurants and retail establishments and create an anchor for a night time economy. There is not a business anywhere near the selected site that will benefit from the arts center being placed there.

All of the above are reasons to question whether the county's vision for the arts center is shared by the community. What are we trying to accomplish with an arts center in Wheaton? The stated

WHEATON ARTS PARADE ♦ ♦ 2801 Elnora St. Wheaton, MD 20902 ♦ ♦ (301) 949-3727

purpose of an arts and entertainment district is economic development. If a location closer to the Metro would accomplish that, it is worth considering a layout that would fit in Parking Lot 13.

Is the purpose of an arts center to provide venues to attract professional performers and artists, and audiences from outside Wheaton, or is it to provide a place for local amateur art makers and performers? Doesn't the Recreation Center already provide space for community activities - dancers, artists, potters, fabric artists? This question needs to be addressed and answered by the county government in consultation with the community so that we move forward knowing that we have a shared vision for the purpose of the arts center.

We urge you to make the future economic development of Wheaton the highest priority. What will Wheaton look like in 30 years if we build an arts center on Lot 13 versus up on Georgia Ave near the Rec Center? If the county doesn't take this opportunity to inject economic activity into the Core District, then what alternative development is planned? We urge you to recognize that this is a once in a decade opportunity to help Wheaton develop its core. It will even help the county attract tenants to its own vacant commercial space on Reddie Drive.

If the county has \$20-40 million to add to the MHP project, please consider the alternative of making those funds available to a developer willing to build on Lot 13 and devote the first two floors to the Wheaton Arts Center. If money is the only reason the county isn't willing to build a 2-story arts center, then why isn't the county willing to raise funds the way they were raised for Strathmore, by attracting donations from philanthropists and by selling naming rights.

The most important thing to realize is that if \$40m is spent on the wrong location, Wheaton will not have a second chance to make the most of that investment. We urge you to reconsider your decision and to allocate sufficient staff and contractor resources to build a shared vision with the community that fully investigates the options for an arts center in the core business district near the Metro.

Sincerely yours,

Dan Thompson  
Executive Director

Cc: County Council President Evan Glass

Attachment: Text of petition signed by more than 200 residents and businesses

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## Build the Wheaton Arts Center Where it Will Stimulate Economic Development

We urge the Montgomery County government to find a location for Wheaton's Arts & Cultural Center that will inject economic activity into Wheaton's center of business. It is critical that Montgomery County select a location that is as close to the Metro station as possible.

The county's plan for the arts center should represent a shared vision with the community, residents and businesses. The county needs to present its site analyses to the public before selecting a location so the pros and cons of alternative locations can be weighed and understood by the public.

The county should not waste scarce resources on a location that will not meet the needs of artists or help Wheaton's businesses. The county only has one chance to build the Wheaton Arts Center. Do not miss this opportunity to create a nighttime economy in Wheaton's Core District.

### Reasons for signing given by some of the signatories:

Julianne Mangin: Putting the arts center where they plan to will not help businesses or artists.

Stefani Olsen: Wheaton has been looking forward to this, please keep it in the wheaton core area near the metro. Art is for everyone

Ruby Harper: The community deserves to be heard and supported with a thoughtful approach. Ditch these 2019 plans!!

Helen Erslev: Why not put the Arts center in the existing new County office building by the Metro Station? Seems like a perfect choice and the building seems vacant.

Judith Levine: It is important for the entire community to be involved. This is best done by placing the arts in a very accessible place. On and near the Triangle are so many spaces. People know them.

Sheridan Neimark: I don't understand the logic of placing this facility in a location where it will be accessed by fewer people.

Andrea Kline: The center should be in the Wheaton Business district with easy Metro access and with more space for artists

Michelle James: Wheaton has a gift of so many talented Artists, and these remarkable talents should be located in an Arts Center close to the Wheaton Metro Station so that it will be an easy stop for DMV visitors. This Arts & Cultural Center will be an attraction that will not only bring visitors, but enhance small businesses supporting the Artists and Visitors, creating a vibrant, stable, profitable & unique destination to the DMV. Locating it close to the Wheaton Metro Station is not only imperative to elevate Wheaton, but elevate to MOCO as well.

Carol Henig: Art is vital to our community and can be the salvation of our youth in a vulnerable area like Wheaton.

Betsy Mendelsohn: MoCo cultural development should enhance existing, densely populated areas by attracting more foot traffic over longer hours. Just be sure that the existing truly small, family-owned businesses have their needs met.

Jeannette Feldner: I want the arts and cultural center in the center of Wheaton's downtown. Please, let's work together to find a way.

Margaret Rifkin: I have expressed my concerns publicly and in writing and requested revising the selection criteria in order to ensure that we are using every opportunity to maximize the benefit to the community of this investment including the economic health and livability of downtown Wheaton.

### SIGNATORIES

Dan Thompson	Keith Donohue	Natalie LaLonde	Ruby Harper
Erin Antognoli	Elizabeth Steel	Tom Hardison	Julianne Mangin
Shawn Magnuson	Eleanor Adcock	Marcus Farrell	Adam Kaluba
Meg Morrow	Alphonse Akuo	Isabella marion	Kareli Bolanos
John MacArthur	Terri Halpern	Catherine O'Farrell	Lillian Luna
Ana k Caceres	Margaret Schneider	Cindy Carpinteyro	Christopher Tom
Meghann Babo	Ross Feldner	Isabella Guzman	Madison Abissi
Leslie Hansley	Stephen Murphy	Nevin Rivera	Ava Salcedo
Avery News	Samantha Helfert	Paola Lozoya	Michael McGee
Ophelia callaway	Theresa Clark	Wilson Sambrano	Julia Perkins
Taycen Ramsay	Carol Henig	Sabrina Martinez	sally Egan
Aiana Brogan	Lisa Traiger	Julia Tutiven	Tavonya Brown
Cecelia Zhao	Kelley Padilla	Brianna Pugh	Joselyn Novak
Christine Lytle	Chip Py	Samantha Williams	Jennie Wong

Shawn Chak	Judy Higgins	Damian Reyes	addyson dobbins
Sandra Selby	Pam Stuckey	Marco Sanchez	William Miller
Monica Van Arkel	Kimberly Queen	Tatiana Oliva	Amberly Fuentes
April Giandomenico	Alicia Stanley	Belén Aguayo Bogado	Shawn Chuilli
Brian Frankel	Andrew Sackett	Sarah Williams	River Rice
Leonard Greenberg	Kyle Lukacs	Jennifer barnett	Andrea Hanks
Margaret Rifkin	Naomi W	Mary Lowly	Laura Cambridge
Laura Alexander	Carolyn Bloom	Claryssa McClung	Randall Luttenberg
Thomas McCloskey	Kathleen Lorenzo	Sophie Robson	Stefani Olsen
Jaylene Sarracino	Glen Burnett	Mirelys Sepulveda	Leah Haygood
Kay Halpern	Jessica Vanderbeck	Brianna Cardin	Mike Cook
Karin Fleschner	Michelle James	Kaya Collins	Jana Darmas
Jamie Herr	Andrea Kline	Lucas Thompson	Marissa Klose
Katie Jankowski	Alan Bowser	Joseph Sakko	Madelyn Assenheimer
Kathryn Lang	Erin Byrne	Alissa Thurman	Gabriel Cole
Kimberly Sicard	Sarah Bram	Mileedi Sierra	Carolyn Heckstall
Oriole Saah	Sheridan Neimark	Gabrielle Buell	Shawn Young
Jeannette Feldner	Alyssa Brown	debra spriggins	Maria Effertz
David Parker	Lauren Lay	Ian Dickson	Sean Crago
Shannon Skowronski	Jameson Shroyer	Preslee Gore	Laura Sayan
Heather Delemarre	Stephanie Kramer	Angel N Luciano III	Mary O'Neill-Wood
Abigail White	Michael Feigenson	Rion Eckel	James Lieberman
Sophia Thompson	Leslie Knee	Jacob Pasko	Eric B Ricks
James Tauber	Francesca Costello	Arturas Sakalauskas	Claire Lieberman
Betsy Mendelsohn	Sharon Babo	Falcon Knight	Kemberly Hernandez
Kaitlin Seng	Boyle Elizabeth	Katrina Hughes	Sarah Rudy
Jacqueline Serigos	Nancy Pressa	Jailen Jacobo	Kenny Coleman
Allison Burton	Carla Garcia	Zuceth Arredondo Avoytes	Patsy Lieberman
LaVerne Walker	Adrienne Moumin	Carol Porter	Mike Fitzpatrick
Judy Szypa	Cordell Pugh	Sarah Goldberg	Lourdes Mendez
Sofia Hart	Carly Bell	Chris Smith	Sara Agu
Carolina Friser-Frederiksen	Russell Williamson	Maggie Molina	Elizabeth Frick

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Francien Berry	Edgington Lisa	Judith Levine	Drew Roberts
Kristy Daphnis	Kali Sharp	Helen Erslev	Rachel Archambault
Joey Hipolito	Hailey Mikulecky	María Elena Sayan	Jufang Tseng
Melanie Donohue	Jennifer Crane	Vulture Bones	Zoe Kaiser
Sevigny Park	Ezra Towne	Zed Trick	Heidi Lovett
Dana Rico	Laurie Moore	Ariel Pearson	

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MID-COUNTY REGIONAL SERVICES  
WHEATON URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Luisa Cardona  
MCRS Director

March 27, 2023

To: County Executive Marc Elrich & Montgomery County Council Education & Culture Committee  
Chair Will Jawando, CM Gabe Albornoz, and CM Kristin Mink

CC: Montgomery County Council

From: Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (Via Luisa Cardona, MCRS Director)

Re: Support Letter on behalf of the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC) regarding  
CIP amendments for the Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center

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Dear County Executive Elrich and Montgomery County Council Education & Culture Committee,

On behalf of the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC), we wish to express our support for the CIP amendments relating to the proposed Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center. Specifically, we support the FY23 amendment to support the site selection process and the FY23-26 amendment supporting the design and construction of such a facility.

As you are aware, Wheaton is an established Arts and Entertainment District, one of 3 designated by the State of Maryland in Montgomery County. Wheaton is home to one of the most diverse communities in the country, yet we have no real established home to display the wide variety of arts that represent our community. This is an opportunity to formalize the creation of this potentially world-class facility, and we strongly urge this Committee and the Council as a whole to support these CIP amendments.

As you are probably aware, the development of this project has been years in the making. Your previous colleague Councilmember Navarro, the County Executive and many of you sitting council members have publicly voiced your support for such a facility in Wheaton. Not only is this an opportunity to provide additional performance and visual arts facilities in this part of the County, it is imperative that we also recognize and continue to activate the traditional and ethnic arts that enrich our community. This is an opportunity to showcase the unique and diverse traditional and ethnic arts that are represented by our community, similar to what has been done by the Smithsonian in Anacostia.

As you may be aware, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) established the Wheaton Cultural Grants, which helped to activate the community, and that grant fund continues to grow. The Wheaton Arts Parade and Festival provides an opportunity to showcase these arts and artists, and its popularity continues to prove the business case that there is support for an established facility to nurture and display these artists' talents.

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2425 Reedie Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor • Wheaton, Maryland 20902  
240-777-8101 • [luisa.cardona@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:luisa.cardona@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

While the support for a Wheaton Community Arts and Culture Center is almost universal, as you may be aware, there are some community concerns regarding the potential location and design of the project. By supporting the FY23 CIP amendment, or even increasing the amount dedicated to the site selection process, your vote will allow for additional current community input and design suggestions. By supporting the FY23-26 amendment for design and construction, you will formalize the project and allow for additional fundraising efforts with the State and other non-profit granting organizations.

There are two items that we wish to address:

It could be more economically beneficial to place the facility closer to the downtown core to support a more vibrant 24-hour economy in the heart of the central business district. It would be more advantageous to support the restaurants and other small businesses if there were an opportunity to collaborate with a developer to create a facility closer to the Metro. This might be possible if the project were a multi-floor facility or a "campus" type of development. Realistic options should be explored during the site selection process funded by the CIP amendment.

The Consultant's reports and the resultant Program of Requirements (POR) were conducted prior to the recent pandemic. It is important to update the POR to reflect new trends in utilization post-pandemic and moving forward. Additionally, the demand for affordable rental rehearsal and performance space in the entire Washington Metro Area continues to increase dramatically, helping to ensure a more viable financial model. The consultants recommended creating an "artist incubator," and the lack of dedicated visual arts gallery or studio space or enough classrooms, and the absence of any maker/fabrication space, seems to ignore these recommendations. If affordable housing is a component, it would be desirable to accommodate affordable artist housing in the project.

In summary, WUDAC supports the approval of both CIP amendments regarding the Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center. We also request that additional funding be included in the FY23 amendment to support additional community input, reevaluation of the POR and supporting assumptions, and to provide an opportunity to update based on the impact of the pandemic. Regardless of final site selection (including the proposed WMATA/MHP location), design issues including additional floors, access, pedestrian safety and post pandemic trends must be addressed. However, this process does not necessarily need to slow down the project since the CIP amendment allows for additional design discussions. Now is the time to formalize this project in the CIP and use the next few months to conduct serious community engagement with all parties involved to maximize the benefits to the community.

We hope that the Committee and the Council concur that an Arts and Cultural Center in Wheaton is a desirable project that should be continued, and that it moves toward a more equitable expression of support for our community. If the County is to treat Wheaton equitably in relation to a functioning Arts and Entertainment District, it is imperative to create a facility that satisfies the ever-growing need of local and regional artists in multiple genres, now and in potential future creations.

Thank you,  
Jim Epstein  
Jim Epstein  
Chair, on behalf of WUDAC

Signature:   
Jim Epstein (Mar 27, 2025 12:34:46 EDT)

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